AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims supersedes all prior versions and listings of claims in this application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of managing service requests from a client module to a plurality of server modules using Web Service Description Language (WSDL) in a Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP), the method comprising:

repeatedly receiving, at at least one separate information-collating monitor module, from each of plural SOAP server modules, an indication of the current operational status of each of the SOAP server modules, said operational status comprising current loading information associated with the SOAP server modules;

receiving, at a control intermediary associated with a client module, from at least one said information-collating monitor module, an indication of the current operational status of each of the SOAP server modules;

selecting, by the control intermediary, of one of the SOAP server modules for directing a WSDL service request [[to]] from the therewith-associated client module based on the received indications of operational status of the SOAP server modules; and

the control intermediary repeating the step of selecting one of the SOAP server modules for directing a WSDL service request [[to]] from the therewith-associated client

module, so as to identify an alternative SOAP server module based on the received loading information, in the event that the transmission of the WSDL service request to the earlier selected SOAP server module fails.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the client module comprises a client application and the control intermediary, the method further comprising:

receiving at the control intermediary a WSDL request ~~for a Web service description~~ from the client application, and selecting one of the SOAP server modules to direct the WSDL request [[to]] based on the indications of current operational status of the SOAP server modules;

the control intermediary receiving the requested WSDL response ~~Web service description~~ and substituting an identifier of the control intermediary into the ~~description~~ response before passing the ~~description~~ response to the client application.

3-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, in which the control intermediary periodically polls the information-collating monitor module to obtain operational status of the SOAP server modules.

9. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a client module and a plurality of Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) server modules, in which the client module is configured to send ~~service~~ Web Service Description Language (WSDL) requests to the SOAP server modules,

at least one information-collating monitor module configured to repeatedly receive, from each of the SOAP server modules, an indication of current operational status of the SOAP server modules, said operational status comprising loading information associated with the SOAP server modules;

the client module comprising a control intermediary configured to receive from the information-collating monitor module an indication of operational status of each of the SOAP server modules, and to select one of the SOAP server modules for directing a ~~service~~ WSDL request to based on the operational status of the SOAP server modules; and

the control intermediary repeating the step of selecting one of the SOAP server modules for directing a ~~service~~ WSDL request to, so as to identify an alternative SOAP server module based on loading information, in the event that the transmission of the ~~service~~ WSDL request to the earlier selected SOAP server module fails.

10. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, the client module further comprising:

a client application,

the control intermediary being configured to receive a WSDL request ~~for a Web service description~~ from the client application, and to select one of the SOAP server modules to direct the WSDL request to based on operational status of the SOAP server modules;

the control intermediary being configured to receive the WSDL requested ~~Web service description~~ response and substitute an identifier of the control intermediary into the ~~description~~ response before passing the ~~description~~ response to the client application.

11-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, in which the control intermediary is further configured to periodically poll an information-collating monitor module to obtain indications of operational status of the SOAP server modules.

17. (Currently Amended) A system according to claim 9, in which the SOAP server modules are Web service servers.

18. (Previously Presented) A storage medium carrying computer readable code representing instructions for causing processors to perform the method according to claim 1 when the instructions are executed by the processors.

19-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium carrying computer readable code representing instructions for causing processors to operate as the system according to claim 9 when the instructions are executed by the processors.

22-23. (Cancelled)